

David L Nieland

Subject: PhD Opportunity in Africa

E Oppenheimer & Son, in conjunction with Debshan Ranch, Zimbabwe and the Wildlife and Reserve Management Research Group (WRMRG) at Rhodes University is pleased to be in a position to offer a 3-4 year PhD for the following exciting project:

Drivers of leopard population dynamics on Debshan Ranch, Shangani, Zimbabwe

The project will require the student to use both established and cutting edge research techniques to study leopards in this area. Debshan ranch is 450 km² in size and lies 100km north-east of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Debshan is a private, commercial cattle (*Bos indicus*) ranch with a large herd (approximately 8000) of cattle. Cattle ranching has been practiced for over a hundred years on the property but wildlife, including leopards, are common and

conflict between leopards and people is a perennial issue. Applicants must meet the following essential criteria:

- Be able to work independently for extended periods in relative isolation from major population centers.
- Applicants should be physically fit and in good health.
- Spend long periods surveying remote areas alone.
- Be able to communicate project progress to local landowners and conservation authorities through regular public presentations and meetings.
- Be computer literate and familiar with data base handling and management techniques.
- Have a full current drivers license.
- Be in possession of own research vehicle.
- Hold an MSc Degree in biology, environmental sciences or another related field.

Successful Applicants will be provided with the following:

- Free basic accommodation.
- Bursaries to cover fees and personal subsistence.

The ideal candidate will have a passion for spending extended periods of time in remote wilderness areas and not be daunted by the challenges faced by this. Additionally candidates should have a keen interest in wildlife ecology with a view to pursuing a career in this field. Preference will be given to Zimbabwean applicants.

Interested applicants should contact Dr Dan Parker (Rhodes University – d.parker@ru.ac.za) and /or Dr Duncan MacFadyen (E. Oppenheimer & Son – Duncan.MacFadyen@eoson.co.za).

Position available from 1st April 2016.

Sue Orloff
Biologists without Borders